



THE BELLOWS

26 GREAT YEAR

November 18, 2004

Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc.

Vol. XXVI, No. ³~~2~~

WHAT	NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF PSPCS
WHERE	DES MOINES MASONIC TEMPLE 2208 S. 223rd St. (Take Midway exit #149 west off I-5...go to first stop light west of Pacific Hwy. South...Turn right.)
WHEN	Thursday, November 18th..7:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. (doors open about 6:00 p.m.)
WHY	A short business meeting..auction (one item lot per member please)..door prize.. Show & Tell..Member's trade and sell tables (free to members, please cover during business meeting.) <u>Program:</u> Gary Sivertsen will report on his recent buying & selling trip to Japan. Also, reports will be given on the Portland Show, Kitsap County Show and Sigg's Vancouver B.C. Show.

BOOKS AND DUES...WHATS HAPPENING?

First, a big, big--THANK YOU--to all of you who have already paid your \$20.00 dues for 2005. Shirley hopes to hear from the rest of you in the very near future. Either see her at the meeting or send your check to her: 300 Pease Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922. Every paid-up member helps insure that your Club can keep running in the beloved black..financially speaking.

The first order of 32 of McKeown's new book..McKeown's Price Guide to Antique & Classic Cameras has been gobbled up (well, it is T.Day month) by eager members. At this time Shirley is compiling a second list of eager paid-up members who would like one of the books. She may not receive enough member interest to be able to order enough books (24) to receive the full book discount from the publisher. However, the Club will guarantee a price of \$85.00 per book; with the same \$5.00 mailing fee if you would like it mailed to your home in a plain brown wrapper. The McKeowns have done another excellent job and there are over 349 pages of new information with a total book listing of over 40,000 cameras accompanied by more than 10,000 photos. This "Bible" of photographica information is well worth the money.

THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY QUESTION:

Answer at end of Newsletter

With thanks to the Western Photographic Historical Society:

What 1955 camera has a ring around the lens barrel for cocking the shutter and advancing the film?



****BACKSIDE INFORMATION****

The October meeting of the Puget Sound Photographic Collectors Society came to order at 7:03 p.m. There were 39 members and guests in attendance. The minutes of the September meetings were approved as read. Treasurer, Shirley, reported our bank balance was on the rise as dues and book payments came in.

NEW BUSINESS:

A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers for our 2005 Show Committee. The following members answered the call: Bill Adams, Stuart Curry, Sheila Fraser, Ed Frey, Don Friend, Walter Hughson, Mike Immel, Bob Kelly, Bill Kimber, Stan Kirlin, Gene Raddatz, David Rystrom, Gary Sivertsen, Shirley Sparrow, Don Tempel, Darrel Womack and Mike (I never saw a Nikon I didn't love) Symons. With a great committee like this our 2005 Show is bound to be a good one. Their first meeting was on November 9th and a progress report will be given at our November meeting.

SHOW & TELL:

Gary Sivertsen reported on the Tucson Show. Sales were not that good but there were a lot of dealers and lookers. As always there were not very many collectibles to be found. User items were in the majority. It seems that dark room items are not selling well these days.

Four other Club members had most interesting Shows and Tells including Bill Kimber's Ebay story of the 8" pot metal figurine of the "devil" cameraman peering into his view camera that sold, not long ago, for an unbelievable price of just over \$1,600 dollars.

PROGRAM:

Seven members showed their favorite photographic gadget(s) from their collection. Who knew such strange items had been invented! Thank you all who took part.

AUCTION AND DOOR PRIZE:

Seven of eight items were auctioned and brought in \$102.00 for their former owners. The one item that failed to get an opening bid was a lot of three enlargers with an opening bid of \$25.00. Another indication of the lack of interest in darkroom equipment.

Ray Hackbarth won the door prize.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 for more buying, selling and nummie munching.



THE BELLOWS Newsletter is published 10 times per year by Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc. Information for The Bellows should be sent to Bill Kimber 1413 Weathervane Dr., Tacoma, WA 98466-5712 (253) 564-4046, billkimber@webtv.net

The P.S.P.C.S. internet address is www.pspcs.org

Dues are \$20.00 per year and should be sent to Secretary/Treasurer Shirley Sparrow, 300 Pease Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922 (509) 674-1916, ssparrow@eburg.com P.S.P.C.S. members receive first notification of our 4th Saturday in April yearly show.

PRESIDENT: DARREL WOMACK (206) 244-6831 DARRELCAM@COMCAST.NET



The Toy and Novelty Camera Collector

by Life Member Rick Soloway

WPHS is lucky to have among its members many avid and accomplished collectors of the finer cameras and devices from the world of photography's illustrious and interesting history. While some pursue collecting certain manufacturers, some may pursue certain types or formats, some pursue historical examples, some collect the arcane and rare, and some may pursue collecting novelty and toy cameras. Every club has to have its kooky iconoclast, and it looks like I'm destined to fill that niche as the guy who collects novelty and toy cameras.

While something made by Leitz would be a gem for any collector, I'm out there skulking around looking for wonderful examples of toy cameras (sometimes they even take pictures, sometimes they do something else). I suppose I could say that I do it solely for the fun, but the reality is that toy camera collecting is still quite affordable, and without making a major investment you can collect many colorful and amusing examples of the toy and novelty camera (and you might even make a few bucks in the process).

Monetary considerations aside, I do have great fun with these playful cameras that I've been able to acquire. The Japanese call it "ikigi" (ee-kee-gi), or the act of enjoying doing the things that you enjoy doing. I enjoy the many varieties, the shapes and sizes, the funny gag functions, and sometimes the ingenious engineering that goes into the manufacture of these clever and humorous little devices. And yes, very often these cameras fall into the category of "miniature" which can be a subspecialty of collecting in itself. While the "toy camera" in its own right seems to have blossomed in the 1940s, the ease and use of early Kodak box cameras made the camera a "child friendly" device from early on. Post war Japan proved to be fertile ground for the manufacture of cheap toy cameras in the late 40s and 50s, adding the now ironically coveted "Made in Japan" stamp. Then, American manufacturers in the 1950s realized that cameras could be used to "market" Roy Rogers, or Dick Tracy, or even Mickey Mouse, mutually benefiting the camera maker and the brand-name in true economic symbiosis. Early "play cameras" were usually functional, including the ubiquitous miniature "Hit" type camera (a micro sized range finder). Later, clever marketing consultants saw the value of using toy cameras to sell everything from Kraft Macaroni to Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Coca-Cola. Ostensibly, these toy cameras were for the child to use to make their own photographs. But, as the toy camera evolved, a new subset of camera came about and became the backbone of the toy/novelty camera genre as we know it today, the "gag" camera.

Gag cameras include the famous "squirt camera", the "head on a spring" pop-out camera, the coiled spring worm jumping out of a lens camera, the cap gun camera, the cigarette lighter cameras, the fake picture cameras (you pretend to take somebody's photo, then pull out a picture of a monkey), and the "view-type" camera (where you look through the viewfinder to see anything from naked women to views of Italy or Disneyland). Some play cameras just look like cameras and make a "click" sound when you push the shutter button.

The advent of smaller film stock allowed for miniaturization with finer cameras like the Minox "spy camera", but also gave birth to the afore mentioned "Hit" type camera. These are little view finder cameras (usually 2" wide) that you might see around at meetings, or perhaps at a camera club sale. There are collectors that collect all the different name (Hit, Joy, Arrow, Tone, etc., etc.) even though the camera is mechanically identical to all the other "brands." Some have nice leather cases, and some come in boxes, and some come in colors. While I have seen rare examples of this type of camera with functioning f-stop and SS settings and a machined body, these generally command much higher prices, and are really an exception and a rare find. More usually, the "Hit" type camera is functional in name only, and would invariably end up in a drawer along with other carnival trinkets and forgotten objects that are too cool to throw out but not good enough to really use. A good example of this kind of cameras with a case can sell for around \$15-\$25. If you find one for less, that's a deal. The "higher end" mini-cams mentioned earlier can sell for over \$200.

Materials used to make toy and novelty cameras parallel those used in the real camera world of their era, with an accent on being "cheap and chichi". That includes Bakelite as well as injected molded plastic, stamped metals, even cardboard! Original packaging, boxes, and cases (leather?) always add to value, even if they are a bit dog-eared or tattered. Which leads me to the question of value. What something is "Worth" and what something can "sell" for can be two different things. Ebay is a reliable way of establishing what something will probably sell for, with the caveat that it's for "that given moment". If the "right bidders" are out there when you're selling your item you can get a good bid and make some money, if they're not there and there other people are selling the same thing, bids may be disappointing. So remember to use a "reserve" price or "high opening bid" to justify the same from your collection. Nonetheless, following an auction of similar items as yours will give you a handle on what it's "worth", or guiding your bid if you're hoping to acquire a particular item.

Roy Rogers cameras (based on the Herco Imperial 620 body) sell for \$30-\$35. The Kodak Boy Scout folding-type khaki camera can go for \$75 to well over \$100, depending on the condition. Dick Tracy cameras (based on the 120 Falcon body) usually sell for \$20-\$30, sometimes more. But the good news is that many, many toy or novelty cameras can be found for under \$10 just about anywhere, and that includes the Internet and eBay, or the local resale shop or garage sale.

You can almost find yourself accidentally starting to collect toy cameras if you have an interest in small cameras like the diminutive Kodak box cameras, or the Kodak Bantam or other smallish cameras. You might have started to collect some of the toy cameras from your era (when you were a kid), just because they have special significance to you. And then you might realize that perhaps you've become one of "us," a novelty camera collector with several examples to show and share with friends who also enjoy having fun collecting.

You may remember, with pleasurer, the "Tales of the Hunt" by well know collector Mike Kessler that we "borrowed" from the Cascade Panorama. Here is one more, I just found, from November -December 2001. It is used with thanks. Ed.

Missed It Again ... By That Much!

by Mike Kessler

It all started with a telephone call from Bryan Ginns. Bryan asked if I had seen the Megaethoscope currently up for auction on eBay. I hadn't, but, as I told Bryan, so what? Megaethoscopes — those humongus, sometimes ornate, Italian day-night viewers — are pretty common. I've sold several plain-jane models over the years, but I've only lusted after the few, overly-opulent versions I've seen squirreled away in collections. Before he sold his collection, Fred Spira had two of the very best. The first was richly carved, with each panel displaying various scenes in deep relief. My favorite panel was the one that showed a woman in a long, flowing dress, holding a camera. To top it off (literally), the Meg was sitting on a similarly over-carved, marble-topped table. If you can believe it, Fred's other Megaethoscope was even better. Also heavily carved, it was supported, not on a table but suspended within the coils of a giant serpent, which was itself locked in mortal combat with a fierce, reclining lion. Not too shabby.

As I clicked on the address Bryan had given me, I didn't think I was going to get too excited. Wrong! Instead of carving, this one was totally covered with fantastic, ivory and ebony marquetry, somewhat reminiscent of East Indian art. It was complete, down to its equally decorated, marble-topped table, and included a "quantity" of views.

It was not actually being auctioned on eBay but was featured in an upcoming Butterfield and Butterfield auction. It was part of an extensive, eclectic collection of furniture and objets d'art belonging to George and Meriam Stoll. George was a famous Hollywood composer who penned the scores for many popular musicals including *Anchors Aweigh*. Because it was located in nearby Los Angeles, Bryan's suggestion was that we might buy it together, sell it through Bryan's annual auction, and split the profits. Bryan graciously added that if I wanted it for myself, he would step aside. I thanked him profusely and said I'd get back ASAP.

On the weekend Gladys and I went to LA to check it out. There it was, a riot of floral and geometric inlay. All the lenses and the various masks were in place. Only a few missing pieces of ivory marred an otherwise fabulous example of 1860s "optical furniture." Of course I wanted it, even though there wasn't a chance of creating a space big enough

anywhere in the house. No serious collector really lets things like that bother them. Bryan suggested that if we could buy it for three or four thousand dollars, it would certainly sell in Europe for at least ten grand. After seeing it, however, my mind was kicked into overdrive, trying to figure out the best way to do the restoration (and what I would have to sell off to pay for it).

Even Gladys, who was pretty cool to the idea at first, thought it might at least make a pretty nifty coffee table. As we left Butterfields and walked to the car, we chatted furiously about the logistics of the situation. Then, in an instant, the bubble burst. Walking briskly toward us was a familiar face, the smiling countenance of Jack Naylor. Emerging from a waiting airport taxi, Jack had flown out from Boston specifically to see the Megaethoscope. Thinking fast I tried to convince him that the auction had actually taken place earlier that morning, but he saw through my shallow attempt.

I called Bryan and told him the story. I knew that Jack had been looking for a great Meg for some years now, and as we all know, when Jack goes after something, it takes pretty deep pockets to deny him the item. In the end, the thought that we (or I) might buy it for a few thousand dollars was a little naive. It went for around 35 Grand. What's really embarrassing is that I still don't know who bought it. I've been meaning to call Jack to see if congratulations are in order, but I just haven't done it yet. Oh well, (cliché alert) you can't win them all (whoever said "the best things in life are free" never collected *anything!*)

So

What 1955 camera has a ring around the lens barrel for cocking the shutter and advancing the film?

Answer:

The Werra 35mm has a clean, streamlined appearance without shutter and advance knobs on

top. Five different models with various improvements were made from 1955 to 1961.

